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Information Resource Center

Article Alert

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DEMOCRACY & HUMAN RIGHTS

1. AMERICAN POLITICS IN THE NETWORKING ERA

By Michael Barone. *National Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 9, February 26, 2005, pp. 590-596

Barone, senior writer at U.S. News & World Report, notes that both the Democratic and Republican parties brought out a record voter turnout in the 2004 presidential election. However, the Bush-Cheney campaign spent an extraordinary amount of energy and money on networking -- making connections with voters through personal contact and building upon existing connections by recruiting volunteers who could persuade people with whom they had something in common to get out and vote. The Democratic strategy, by contrast, depended on paid workers persuading strangers to vote. Barone believes that in industrial, command-and-control America, the Democrats' method may have been effective, but in information-age, networking America, the Republicans' strategy worked better. Even though the Republicans won't have an incumbent to put forth for the 2008 campaign, the 2004 Bush-Cheney campaign "created a quantum of social-connectedness ... [that will be] a long-lasting asset for the Republican Party."

2. THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICA'S SOFT POWER

By Nathan Gardels. *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Winter, 2005, pp. 6-19

Gardels, editor of the New Perspectives Quarterly, describes a new paradigm, a world with porous borders where power is associated with economic prowess and the sway of hearts and minds rather than military might. He contends that American ideas of personal freedom, equality under the rule of law, and social and economic opportunity -- soft power -- was a legitimizing complement to US military might and helped undermine the hard power of the Soviet empire. Gardels describes the unease felt in the Muslim world where prayer and faith are in collision with Western secular materialism. He also discusses how world public opinion of the US since the invasion of Iraq has had the profound strategic consequence of the loss of US soft power.

3. AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN

By Joshua Muravchik. *American Enterprise*, Vol. 26, No. 3, April-May 2005, pp. 32-34.

Muravchik, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, describes the worldwide movement towards democracy and particularly recent changes in the Middle East. Experts wrongly advised that democracy couldn't work in Japan in the post-World War II era. Muravchik argues that the Middle East will not remain a bastion of autocracy, and that there are positive signs from diverse groups that there is a movement toward democracy. He calls 2005 "the year of Arab elections" and says that democracy is arriving in unexpected spurts.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

4. HOW FASTER TRADE CAN HELP FEED THE POOR

By John Nash and Donald Mitchell. *Finance & Development*, Vol. 42, No. 1, March 2005, pp. 34-37

Nash and Mitchell, both with the World Bank, say that eradicating costly protectionist barriers may be one of the best ways to feed the poor. They note that the world already produces enough food to feed everyone, so the current focus on increasing national food production is the wrong approach. Global trade liberalization could make important contributions to combating hunger by delivering cheap food in protectionist countries and boosting the global economy, helping to lift millions out of poverty, they write. The authors describe the negative aspects of protectionist food policies, such as that fact that they encourage farmers to plant low-value crops, create higher domestic food prices, and policymakers use them as a substitute for more effective options.

5. TRADING PLACES

By Peter F Drucker. *The National Interest*. Spring 2005., Iss. 79; pp. 101-108

Drucker discusses the different new world economy from that of the fifty years following World War II. The United States may well remain the political and military leader for decades to come and also the world's richest and most productive national economy for a longtime, but it is no longer the single dominant economy. Even more novel is that what is emerging is not one but four world economies: a world economy of information; of money; of multinationals; and a mercantilist world economy of goods, services and trade.

GLOBAL ISSUES

6. BLOGGING: WHAT IS IT? HOW HAS IT AFFECTED THE MEDIA?

By Patrick Beeson. *Quill*, Vol. 93, No. 2, March 2005, pp. 16-19

The author writes that web logs – known as “blogs” – have become ubiquitous on the Internet, providing information and opinion on every imaginable topic. Blogs are easier to set up than web sites, and individuals who create and write for blogs – known as “bloggers” – can broadcast their raw, unedited material to a potentially unlimited audience on the World Wide Web. Beeson believes that bloggers generally don’t aspire to be journalists in the traditional sense, but simply want to put forth their opinions on issues covered in the conventional media. Blogs proved their value in supplementing the traditional media, when they were among the first to cover the devastation caused by the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean region; many bloggers in the region provided immediate firsthand accounts of the destruction and loss of life.

7. WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

By Robert W Kates, Thomas M Parris, Anthony A Leiserowitz. *Environment*, Apr 2005.Vol.47, Iss. 3; pp. 8-22.

Kates et al discuss the concept of sustainable development, the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A brief history of the concept, along with the interpretive differences and the common ground in definitions, goals, indicators, values, and practice are also described.

8. THE END OF OIL

By James Howard Kunstler. *Rolling Stone*. New York: Apr 7, 2005., Iss. 971; pp. 45-48

The term "global oil-production peak" means that a turning point will come when the world produces the most oil it will ever produce in a given year and, after that, yearly production will inexorably decline. It is usually represented graphically in a bell curve. The peak is the top of the curve, the halfway point of the world's all-time total endowment, meaning half the world's oil will be left.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

9. TWO KINDS OF INTERNATIONALISM

By Marc F Plattner. *The National Interest*, Spring 2005. pp. 84-95.

Europeans, shaped by their EU integration, are devoted to multilateralism, while Americans exhibit an increasing penchant for unilateralism. However, after the Second World War, the US largely overcame its older isolationist tendencies and became the key architect of the ensemble of multilateral institutions that still shape the international landscape. Here, Plattner contends that Americans are no longer isolationists, though they will embrace international engagements only with certain limits. Moreover, he asserts that Americans are not adverse to multilateralism but are in fact naturally inclined to internationalism. However, they are hostile to globalism.

10. THE UNITED STATES AND ASIA IN 2004: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

By Jonathan D. Pollack. *Asian Survey*, January/February 2005, Vol.45, Iss. 1; pp. 1-13.

U.S.-Asian relations in 2004 were largely a waiting game. There were continued challenges to the regional status quo, but the United States was intent on deflecting and deferring the possibility of major change. The Bush administration, preoccupied by the president's reelection campaign and increased violence and instability in Iraq, sought principally to avoid potential crises, while hoping to garner increased regional support for U.S. policy goals, including in Iraq. As a second Bush presidential term approached, the agenda confronting U.S. policy makers seemed uncomfortably full, reflecting equal measures of unfinished business, pressures for change on both sides of the Pacific, and the ever-present potential for a major regional crisis.

11. INDONESIA IN 2004: THE RISE OF SUSILO BAMBANG YUDHOYONO

By R. William Liddle and Saiful Mujani. *Asian Survey*, January/February 2005.Vol.45, Iss. 1; pp. 119-126

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a retired army officer, became Indonesia's first directly elected president, defeating incumbent Megawati Sukarnoputri in a landslide. Key positions in economic ministries were awarded both to pro-market and protectionist groups, a shortly before the election suicide bomb killed nine people and wounded nearly 200, intensifying the nation's search for al-Qaeda-linked terrorists.

U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES

12. INTO THE GREAT WIDE OPEN

By Jesse Sunenblick. *Columbia Journalism Review*. March/April 2005.Vol.43, Iss. 6; pg. 44, 7 pgs

Proponents of the spread spectrum claim that the technology could put an end to most forms of radio interference, presaging a time when the airwaves, one of the most regulated heavily regulated resources, could be opened up. The impact of spread spectrum in human communication and in journalism is detailed.

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